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Mariposa

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Mariposa

Alicia McDonald, Texas Tech University, USA

Keywords: Textile Innovation, Couture Techniques, Sustainability

UGS: Undergraduate Student

LP: Limited Production

Bust: 34" Waist: 26.5" Hip: 37"

Design Mentor Statement:

The purpose of the mentorship relationship was to further develop concepts that the student had interested in exploring for a fashion garment and application. The purpose was met through rigorous processes to develop the concept into fully functional garments. The idea of glasswork incorporated into a garment and then taking the theme and inspiration and running through every thread and aspect of the ensemble from head to toe. The student was chosen because of her strong sense of design, self branding, and impeccable jewelry making, art, surface design, and textile development skills. The student has a clear design point of view and a strong grasp on taking her work into the marketplace.

Design Statement:

This ensemble was created based on my theory, "Creativity comes from not having what you think you need." I gained inspiration from the popular Latin celebration of Dia De Los Muertos. The culture maintains a certain mockery of the wealthy, in this celebration they often depict the social neutrality that death brings to us all. In death we are all the same, wealthy or poor; you often see this in the artwork depicting elaborately dressed skeletons participating in great festivities. Growing up with fewer resources than most, I learned how to create the things I wanted with the resources I had available. I also discovered that people around me coveted the things I created because they were authentic from the mainstream goods. It is this process of discovering my own creativity and ability to create couture garments that has bonded me with the Dia de Los Muertos belief that we are all the same beneath social judgments of class and wealth. And therein lies the purpose of this project, Mariposa, is to show that you can create something experimental, innovative, and couture despite limitations of wealth and social class.

In creating this ensemble I utilized hand felting, laser cutting, stained glass, and free form stitching to create authentic textiles. The body of the coat was created by hand felting 100% Alpaca batting. In creating my sample square, the finished piece was organically shaped like a butterfly. Butterfly in Spanish is, "Mariposa." Mariposa is symbolic of new life, the presence of those who have preceded you and this is where the project name came into being. The felting process took approximately 30 hours to create textiles of the coat. I chose to utilize the beautiful and organic edges that naturally formed during the felting process as a further symbolism of the mariposa and bringing new life to old material. An example of textile innovation and of bringing new life to old material is seen in the stained glass artwork in the coats center back bodice. Utilizing stained glass from my late granddad's workshop, I was able to create a design often seen in the Dia de Los Muertos artwork with regard to butterflies. The stained glass face of the skeleton represents the body of the butterfly. The stained glass art piece took 20 hours to cut, wrap in copper tape, and solder together. Each glass component offers a different texture that I wanted consumers to have the ability to enjoy kinetically as well as a visual transition into the appliquéd

wings. I created a leather frame for the glass piece to secure it into the coat bodice. The backing of the frame is a white, custom floral motif, laser cut leather that allows the client to wear the coat with or without the stained glass component. The wings are constructed by appliquéing together multiple segments and details of varying cotton textiles to create an authentic design transitioning from the glass component onto the back felted alpaca wool bodice and skirt of the coat.

My original design print on the lining of the coat was created and printed digitally onto a Polyester Crepe de Chine textile. The rose motif, which will carry thru to the laser cut leather slip dress, and then the wording, "Be Beauty," and, "Inspire," were all created in Adobe Illustrator.

The textile for the white leather slip dress, which is seen underneath the wool coat, was created using laser cutting. The motif was created utilizing Adobe Illustrator. The motif is of two roses and often used in Dia de Los Muertos imagery. I hand cut leather fringe that i utilized horizontally at the center front of the dress to be representative of the human skeleton that we each carry within us. Death is not something to fear, we carry it with us at all times.

In creating the choker seen with the ensemble, I utilized felt, fabric scraps, a zipper, and beads that I had in my supply box from previous projects. Bringing new life to otherwise discarded surplus. By using free form stitching and a variety of thread colors, I was able to create a vibrant and authentic textile to complete the ensemble.

